

From
Baluchistan
to the
Philippines

FOUR YEARS OF METHODIST
EPISCOPAL MISSION WORK IN
SOUTHERN ASIA

By
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INDIA is more a continent than a country, containing about one fifth of the earth's population, governed by the white man, and most of her people, like ours, belonging to the Aryan race; therefore we have a special responsibility and opportunity, and the destiny of India's multiplied millions is peculiarly in the hands of the Anglo-Saxon race.

Their peculiar intellectual power is embodied in their philosophical religion. Neither at Athens, Ephesus, nor at Rome did Paul face such a powerful philosophical religious system as do our missionaries in India. Those religious systems were born after Hinduism, and have been so long dead that even their names are ancient history. Buddhism came and struggled bravely for full fifteen centuries to reform Hinduism, but was driven out by the wily Brahman. During eight centuries the Moham-medans pursued their bloody, iconoclastic, religious propaganda, yet, notwithstanding all this, over two hundred millions to-day in India, under Brahman influence, worship the hideous idols of Hinduism.

BEGINNING OF INDIA'S ELEVATION

Though all these mighty non-Christian influences utterly failed to reform and elevate caste-cursed India, yet, under the combined influence of a Christian government and Christian missions, there is a magnificent beginning of India's elevation and salvation. The government has given India twenty-six thousand miles of railway, on which all castes travel together, and this lifts up the lowest and levels down the highest caste people. Further, the government has fourteen million acres under irrigation. In one place a tunnel was made one and one fourth miles in length through a mountain, thus diverting part of a river from its course, pouring it out upon the plain and irrigating 160,000 acres, from which 400,000 people are fed, and the people gratefully declare that the white man has done what their gods cannot do.

The princely American gifts to alleviate the sufferings of the famine-stricken people have favorably influenced great multitudes. Government and missions combined have given India various college centers, and 20,000 students annually attend these seats of learning. These, with many lower-grade schools, unite in elevating and Christianizing India. Nevertheless, India is so many-sided and has such an enormous population that even with all these elevating advantages it is estimated that there are still 60,000,000 people in India so poor that they seldom, if ever, retire to rest having had a meal that satisfies. Only eleven per cent of the males of India and a little more than one half of one per cent of the females can read. Nine tenths of the 300,000,000 people in India live in villages averaging 360 persons to a village. Livingstone received his call to his great lifework by hearing Moffat, after returning from Africa, say, "I can see the smoke of a

thousand villages where the Gospel has not gone." I have to report that after a quadrennium of extensive travel in India I can see the smoke not of a thousand villages, not of a hundred thousand, but of five hundred thousand villages in which there is not a Christian. Who can estimate the opportunity and the responsibility of the Christian Church in India? May many Livingstones hear the call!

BURMA

Burma is the second country in our Southern Asia field, and its size and geographical position make it of very great importance in the chain of our Asiatic Missions. It borders on India, China, Siam, and the Malay States, and has a long seacoast. Its population is not so dense as India and China; many thousands of the emigrating population from both countries pour into Burma, and their commingling in social customs, religion, labor, and business brings the missionary face to face with one of the most intensely interesting and perplexing social and religious problems on the face of the earth.

The Burmese are bright and have no caste system, as in India; they have the purest form of Buddhism; seventy per cent of their males can read, and Buddhist children flock to good Christian schools. Missionary success in Burma will mark a great advance in the Eastern world. Our Mission has outlined an extensive plan for evangelistic work, multitudes thoughtfully listen to the Gospel, and we confidently look, from among the Burmese, for a great movement toward Christianity. I greatly desire that Burma should, in a large measure, be on the heart and remembered in the prayers and gifts of the whole Church as one of her great and most hopeful mission fields.

MALAYSIA

Malaysia includes a peninsula and an "island continent" with a present population, excluding the Philippines, about equal to that of the United States. The coming importance of this field is suggested by the fact that Java, one of the smaller islands, has now a population of 37,000,000; the other islands have an equally good soil and climate, and when they are as densely populated they will support over 400,000,000. Overpopulated India and China are finding here a place to which to overflow. Borneo alone is larger than Ohio and all the States east of it. When in its chief city I was shown about by an Indian with whom I conversed in Hindustani, and went with the rajah to his garden in the evening, listened to a Manila band, and saw so many well-to-do Chinamen I almost felt that I was in an improved China. The Kapuas River, in Borneo, is a mile wide and navigable by ocean steamers for over 300 miles. For more than 200 miles the banks of this river present the appearance of an almost continuous village without a Protestant missionary, but the Moham-medans are crowding in their missionaries.

From Ceylon, India, Burma, Siam, China, Japan, the Celebes, the Philippines, and all the surrounding islands students come to our great Anglo-Chinese self-supporting school in Singapore, until the students represent forty languages, and already some are returning home as Christians to these various countries carrying the Bible and Christianity with them. We have urgent calls to enter Bangkok, in Siam, the Celebes, and others of these very needy islands. If we could send six new missionaries at once, it would give us but one missionary for 8,000,000 people. I trust our Malaysia Conference may have in the very near future a much larger place in the thoughts, plans, prayers, and gifts of the Church.

THE PHILIPPINES

The exceedingly encouraging facts about our Mission in the Philippines are well and widely known. The independent Filipino Catholic Church movement is reported to have led from two to three millions of people out of Rome. It is a joy to report that we have now 8,076 members and probationers in the Philippine Islands. Through the Evangelical Union, which divides the territory among the Missions, our Mission was given equal privileges in Manila. To the north, the very choicest part of the island of Luzon was allotted to us, and still larger sections have since been recognized by the union as our territory.

The Presbyterians and Baptists have their missions in Manila, southward in Luzon, and on the other islands. It has generally been conceded that the division of territory gave abundance of field and special advantages to all Missions. Recently the Peniel Mission asked us to take them and their work in the island of Mindanao, and this opens up to us the largest southern island. We believe by far the greatest missionary opportunity in immediate results ever opened to our Church is in our possession in the Philippine Islands. Our hope and our prayer is that the funds for churches and additional missionaries may soon reach the field, and that Methodism may fully measure up to its obligations in the evangelization of the Filipino people.

ADVANCES DURING THE QUADRENNIUM

The increase of our Christian community has been 34,893—that is, a sustained increase of 8,723 each year, or a total of thirty-one per cent during the quadrennium. We had at the end of November, 1903, a Christian community of 146,547, and know of

special increases since then which make our present Southern Asia Christian community over 150,000. The Epworth League membership increased 6,094, giving a total of 17,973. Our Sunday school scholars increased 31,681, making a grand total of 123,737. We have 108 missionaries and 82 missionaries' wives, and 153 missionaries of the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society, who are just as consecrated, loyal, successful, and amenable to the authority of the Church as the men, and in the midst of the India zenana system and other peculiar customs their cooperation is preeminently important. We owe our success in Southern Asia, with God's blessing, to this united force of missionaries and to the prevalence of love, harmony, consecrated common sense, and the infilling of the Holy Spirit as an equipment for service. We devoutly thank God for this noble body of consecrated missionaries.

We also have 150 native members of Annual Conferences, each of whom before becoming a full Conference member passed at least twelve examinations and was under special observation during the same number of years. These brethren, as would be expected, have very largely caught the spirit of our missionaries, and we have noble Indian brethren in our India Methodism who compare very favorably with many of our home ministers. We have, in addition, including our teachers and all other grades, 4,320 workers. In summarizing, the Central Conference Statistical Secretary selected thirty-one leading facts of mission work and gave the increases and decreases of the quadrennium. In all these figures there are only four decreases, namely, a decrease in the number of missionaries' wives and paid workers, and educational institutions (though of the last there are still 1,245), but the notable decrease is that of 63,095 rupees in our

property debt, while our property increased in value 1,385,054 rupees. We could have had many thousand more baptisms, but we have not had missionaries and workers sufficient to teach and develop them, and we have not considered it wise or safe to baptize faster than we could instruct our converts. Had there been sufficient workers to reasonably prepare and care for the converts, we could have reported another hundred thousand Christians. Our presiding elder, the Rev. P. M. Buck, of Meerut, as a missionary of the board, is alone with 23,000 Christians, but, being a true Methodist and loyal to her peculiar means of grace, he has in his district 600 class leaders. It is a pleasure to report that India Methodism has her class meetings.

SOME ENCOURAGING FACTS

Northwest India Conference was organized only eleven years ago, and it reported at the last session a Christian community of 64,319, or almost 20,000 more than any other of our missionary Conferences in any part of the world. When the Indian census was taken in 1901, after a decade, the English nation was astonished to learn that while the whole population of India had increased only seven and a half per cent, the Christian population had increased thirty per cent; but in the United Provinces, where our great North India and Northwest India Conferences are, the government census shows that the Christian population has increased three hundred per cent.

EPWORTH LEAGUE

At the last session of our Northwest India Conference 160 Epworth League charters were given out to as many chapters. Previous to this time

there were 58 chapters that had received charters, thus making a total of 218 Epworth League chapters and 8,380 members in that eleven-year-old Conference. One of these Leagues holds 40 evangelistic meetings a week, and has 400 members, and 65 of its members are looking forward to the ministry.

SUNDAY SCHOOLS

Let me give you a comparative statement that will throw some light on our place as a Mission in India. We have an "India Sunday School Union," and the Sunday schools of about forty Missions are affiliated, and the children are counted as members in the union. The secretary of the union addressed our Bengal Conference in Calcutta at its last session, and said: "There are 300,000 Sunday school children in the union, and it ought to be encouraging to you American Methodists to be told that 100,000, or one third of the entire number, belong to your Mission." We have now 123,737 Sunday school attendants. In familiarity with the Scriptures we believe many of our Indian youth compare very favorably with the average of the American young people in our Sunday schools.

CONVERSIONS

In our Gujarat District, Bombay Conference, we have had one of the most remarkable advances from among non-Christians known in any Mission anywhere. In the Fiji Islands 30,000 converts were reported after twenty years, which has been the most wonderful record of missionary success known, but in Gujarat we have had 23,000 converts in less than ten years, and, if we could put in a reasonable increase of workers, before twenty years have passed

present indications lead us to hope we shall be far beyond 100,000, and 2,000,000 out of 11,000,000 Gujarati people appear to be as accessible as those who have become Christians. We confidently expect that by the time the 2,000,000 have become Christians the entire 11,000,000 will be accessible. God is moving among the nations, and his kingdom is coming on earth. Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

Our work is not only developing numerically, but we endeavor to have a fully equipped Church in all departments. We have in our schools of all grades, from the primary and kindergarten to the colleges, 35,438 pupils. Our Educational Committee at our Central Conference, after carefully reviewing our educational work, reported that "besides many day schools in the various Conferences, we have in Southern Asia the following institutional schools." By institutional schools they mean institutions where there are boarders, and usually day scholars also. There are very few of these schools that have less than one hundred pupils, and they grade up to seven hundred. We have no less than 112 such institutions, and in twenty-six of these which have industrial work there are 3,986 pupils. When I recall the small number of missionaries and our unfavorable climate, I cannot but marvel that so much is being accomplished.

THE PRESS

The printing press, an indispensable and mighty arm of missionary power, we are using to the utmost limit of our ability. Our Missionary Society has never been able to grant much toward this depart-

ment of work; nevertheless, we have six publishing houses and are publishing in practically all the languages in which we are working. Not having missionary grants for publication, we are compelled to do secular printing, in order to use the profits in printing Christian literature for the infant Church. We publish many million pages annually. I know of no way in which men of wealth could better advance the kingdom than in helping us give Christian literature to the many people of this great mission field.

EXPANSION OF OUR WORK

Although we have been unable to make a further advance in the direction of Central Asia, we still maintain our outpost at Quetta, while two heroic ladies hold an outpost on the Kumaon border of Tibet, from which for a term of years past frequent visits have been made into the forbidden land, while workers are getting ready to enter as soon as permanent occupation is possible. At the other end of our Mission, in Malaysia, our borders are being extended, and one of the great events of the quadrennium is the founding of a Mission in Borneo, where we have already five church buildings and 500 Christians. The expansion in the Philippines has been remarkable, and in our old fields we have filled out much work which was before only in outline. Six new districts have been formed in India, which include the great provinces of Punjab and Rajputana, and great advances on the Godavery District, which reaches into the region of the Oriya language.

OUR CHRISTIANS

What kind of Christians have you in India? We have all kinds—good, bad, and indifferent. I

might ask you the question, What kind have you in America? I suppose you would have to give about the same answer. If our Indian Christians are judged by what they give up, I think many are far ahead of the Christians at home. If judged by what they proportionately give, many of them would shame any Christians I have ever known. Who at home goes without food to give? If giving is to be judged not so much by what is given as by what is left, they are very great givers.

In many of our villages there is a prayer meeting every night. It takes the place of family worship where the people in the homes cannot read. I was a short time ago at a meeting where there were 400 Christians present, and I asked those who lived in villages where there was a prayer meeting every night to raise their hands, and almost all in the house raised their hands. One of our missionaries told me of a collection where there were some poor widows, and she knew that not one of them had more than one anna (two cents) in the world, but they each gave two pice (or one cent) at the missionary collection, or half of all they had in the world. The missionary said, "My eyes filled with tears of shame," and so might the eyes of a large part of the whole Church.

THE OUTLOOK

Remarkable as has been the growth of our work during the past quadrennium, that alone does not measure the full depth of our reasons for gratitude. The future opens before us with brighter promise than ever before. In the beginning of our work in India we had to search diligently to find the individual inquirer, but now we are sought for by those whom we have not called.

In considering the outlook for the future no one thing demands more careful consideration than the mass movement of the lower castes toward Christianity. The leaven of the Gospel has so permeated the mass of the population that all over the land there are indications of dissatisfaction with old religions and social customs, and of a desire on the part of large bodies of people in masses to accept Christianity. That these movements are influenced by motives of many kinds, not all of the highest, and that evils of greater or less magnitude may accompany them, is a matter beyond doubt. But the fact remains that these movements give the Church of Christ an opportunity to preach the Gospel to millions who before were inaccessible. Freed from restraint and avowedly seeking alliance with a new religion, they are more than accessible—they are a field ripe unto the harvest.

In upper India, in addition to the sweeper caste, from which we have already received 100,000 converts, the great Chamar caste, numbering millions of adherents, seems on the verge of such a mass movement; in Gujarat the weaver caste, numbering 2,000,000 souls, is pleading for teachers and preachers to prepare them for baptism; in Central India 500,000 Satnamis, a monotheistic class, by their favorable attitude invite conquest. In the Kanarese country, in Rajputana, in the great Punjab, and in other sections of the land these movements are already begun or seem imminent. This is Christianity's opportunity; if accepted it means an amazing development of the kingdom of God on earth and the transformation of a land such as has never before been witnessed. Shall Methodism fail in this hour of opportunity in its mission to give the Gospel to the depressed millions of India?

OUR NEEDS

Our greatest need is for more missionaries. Our founders and leaders are dropping very rapidly out of our ranks, and there are not sufficient men in training for their places to close up the ranks. There are too few missionaries even to care sufficiently for our Christians. We have few more missionaries in India proper now, where we have 150,000 Christians, than when we had only 10,000. Think of a missionary alone to develop 23,000 Christians. How, then, are we to enter the great open doors on every hand? Are we to let these multitudes perish without the Bread of life? I hear the Master say, "Give ye them to eat." Let us bring what we have to Christ, as the disciples did, and he will bless, and these hungry souls shall be fed and saved.

We need and could use to great advantage fifty new missionaries. Where are they to come from? When at North Indiana Conference, Bishop McCabe, famous for money-raising, presiding, I told the story of our needs in the city of Agra, where we had a church and parsonage built by the people, but had been unable to put a missionary for five years. I found a man and his wife willing to go, and Bishop McCabe gave me the privilege of about three minutes before the Conference to state the case. I asked for his salary, only \$950. Bishop McCabe opened with a subscription of \$100, and soon they raised the salary; the money continued to pour in, and they said, "What shall we do?" I answered, "Raise the transit," and the money continued to pour in until it passed \$1,500, salary and transit. This help from that great Conference will send a thrill of joy throughout our whole India Mission. Many people in moderate circumstances have been answering Bishop Thoburn's call for support of native pastors at \$30 and upward, and the response

has saved the situation up to this hour. But we must have advances. The richer individuals, churches, districts, and Conferences must support missionaries. If only fifty such from our whole Church who cannot go in their own person would go in the person of one who can, our Church would move out and lead the world as a missionary force. The nations will be evangelized when Christ's spirit of self-sacrifice and giving shall possess the Church.

Our ministry is ready to go. On my return I made a call for three men for whom I had salaries and received forty applications for the places. Good men turned pale with disappointment when I had to say, "The places are filled; I have no money; I cannot send you."

A CONTINUOUS REVIVAL

It is a great joy to report that throughout the quadrennium we have been in almost continuous revival, so much so that I have been reminded of Peter's defense for preaching to the Gentiles, "And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell upon them, as upon us at the beginning." This blessing of expectation included also the final and complete victory in saving the nations. What are the signs? God has marvelously been preparing the way for India's evangelization. At the beginning of modern missions all India was closed and opposed to Christianity, but now multiplied millions are accessible. Then Christian nations were opposed to missions. It is not remembered by many that the first British missionaries to India had to fly to the Danish government for protection. Now Great Britain not only protects, but welcomes and co-operates with missionaries from all Christian lands, and the waves of grace are coming to India with missionaries from many shores.

One is often asked, "Do you believe that the mighty non-Christian nations will ever be evangelized?" Here is an answer: The Son of God has begun to build his Church among the Christless nations. Shall onlooking angels, men, and devils in derision say, "Christ, the Son of God, began to build his Church among the nations, but was not able to finish?" Nay, verily. But time rolls apace, when, like Thomas, with all doubts gone, all tribes and nations on the face of the earth shall look into his glorious face and say, "My Lord and my God!"

"The restless millions wait
The light whose dawning
Maketh all things new.
Christ also waits,
But men are late.
Have we done what we could?
Have I? Have you?"